

Ranch Creek Elementary

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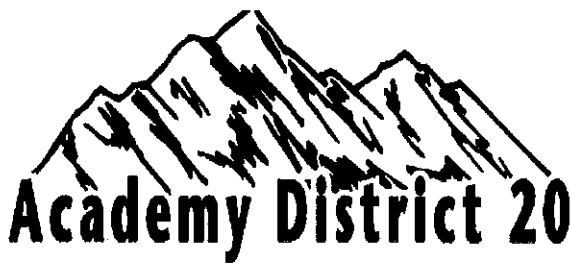
Colorado Springs, CO 80924

Highly Effective School Library: Ranch Creek Elementary School Narrative

Our Ranch Creek Elementary School library in Academy School District Twenty was awarded Highly Effective status the first year the HESL program was initiated. Within those three years, our school has been awarded International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program authorization. I have been deeply involved in the IB authorization process from the beginning, and have closely intertwined our library program into the foundations and implementation of IB at our school. I have collaboratively been a part of writing thirty-two units of inquiry with every grade level, attended IB trainings on collaboration, transdisciplinary themes and Exhibition, and have collected and vetted resources for our program. My collaborative co-teaching lessons have been carefully crafted to blend 21st Century Learning skills within these IB units of inquiry.

I have been a part of Ranch Creek since we opened our doors as a new school eight years ago. During that time I have carefully developed a collaborative environment between me and our outstanding teachers. Together we have explored and used new tools to implement our units of inquiry. I have learned how to train teachers and implement iPads in our classrooms with our goal of using the device at the highest level of the SAMR model. We now have a Ranch Creek Mustang Book list program where students can read excellent books from the list, reflect on the book, and receive rewards for reading. I have incorporated Thinking Maps into my daily instruction to fully engage our students in the act of learning. Recently we have added a Makerspace area of the library, and our first grade students joyously made homemade musical instruments as part of the unit of inquiry on How We Express Ourselves. Our students are using e-books and quality databases to interact with nonfiction text. This year, as part of our IB meetings, I have met with individual grade levels to lead professional development using online tools such as Google Docs, Mystery Skype and iPad apps such as Book Creator. I am participating in our Digital Learning Coach training through our school district. We are studying what makes a good coach, brainstorming how to best implement our programs, and attending trainings for digital learning. This year, I met with five of our teachers to plan our HESL growth plan goals with the result of even more investment and enthusiasm for our library program.

I believe one of the most powerful ways the library program has impacted student achievement has been through the daily collaborations I have with our teachers using a co-teaching model. Together we plan, teach and reflect constantly whether purposefully in meetings or on the fly when time is tight. A foundation of trust has been built over years, where we are not afraid to brainstorm, take risks, ask hard questions, and make learning the best it can be for our students. I have been writing rubrics to assess student 21st Century Skills such as self-direction and collaboration, and I have been helping students explore new ways of expressing their creativity through productivity iPad apps, but none of the student achievement would be possible without the solid foundation of collaboration between our library program and the teachers. I am excited to move forward with our annual growth plan goals.



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I am thrilled to affirm and amplify this narrative! The library at Ranch Creek is the hub of our school and the library program is the foundation for our learning. I am excited and inspired every day by our library program and the outstanding attributes of our school that result from it. These include:

- A highly successful culture of collaboration - in planning, instructing and assessing - across the entire school, as a result of Jessica's skill in building and maintaining trust. She has developed and nurtured collaborative relationships with each new teacher as our school has grown from nine classrooms to twenty classrooms over the last eight years.
- A deep understanding of content. Jessica is a true curriculum specialist, knowledgeable about all standards in all content areas at all grade levels, and she shares this knowledge during curriculum planning with teams or individual teachers. She has built an outstanding collection of high quality resources for our school, through diligent discovery and vetting, and exemplary relationships with vendors.
- Best practices in teaching and learning. As a former classroom teacher and an avid learner in the IB PYP, Jessica provides leadership for the school in our continued development of the Program of Inquiry, including the seamless embedding 21st century skills into our IB Units of Inquiry.
- Envious capacity in teacher leadership. Jessica was the first, and remains the foremost, of many teacher leaders at Ranch Creek, and she continues to model this role for others. She provides professional development, leads initiatives and innovation, and enjoys mutually beneficial relationships with administration, teaching staff and support staff.

I couldn't be more excited about the future of our library!

Jessica Babbs

Teacher Librarian

Susan Paulson

Principal